

## COCHITUATE AQUEDUCT

The Cochituate Aqueduct is an underground pipe running 5.2 miles through Wellesley from the Natick line near Route 9 to the Charles River and Newton near Walnut Street. The Aqueduct began providing Lake Cochituate water to the City of Boston in 1848 and continued that function for about 100 years. During this period of time the MDC would send out its work crews who would annually sweep out the Aqueduct. When these crews came to Wellesley, they were viewed with awe and mystery.

After the MDC stopped using the Aqueduct, the Town of Wellesley expressed an interest in purchasing the property. After a few years of negotiations, the Town assumed ownership of the 55.8 acres in 1962. The land was purchased for drainage and utility purposes as well as its use to tie together public lands such as at the Town Hall and Hunnewell Field. The land was and is still used for footpaths along most of the corridor. Since the elevation drops only one foot along the entire length in Wellesley, the path has become very popular for joggers and bicycles.

The abandoned aqueduct is a brick pipe that has an egg shaped cross-section 6 1/2 feet high and 5 feet wide. The 3 outlets and 5 inlets are the only breaks providing access for the drainage system. The outlets are at Morses Pond, the Duck Pond and at Indian Springs Brook near Croton Street.

The section of Aqueduct near Forest Street is protected by the Board of Selectmen because it contains the rare in Massachusetts plant, "Spring Beauty", *Claytonia caroliniana*.

The section of Aqueduct near Cedar Street has undergone some major changes. In 1964 the overpass containing the Aqueduct was torn down because the structure blocked views and created a traffic hazard. The pipe was sealed and the entire slope was graded to a 5:1 slope, loamed and seeded. A monument was installed to commemorate the historical value of the Aqueduct and the area was landscaped somewhat. In 1989 an extensive low maintenance landscape was installed and the area was renamed Aqueduct Park.

In addition to activities on the Aqueduct proper, the land also serves as a pedestrian connector to many other municipal properties. These include: Morses Pond Water Works land, Morses Pond Beach, MacKinnon and Kendall Ponds, MacKinnon Playground, Weston Road substation, Central Park, Railroad Ave. Parking Lot, Town Hall, Morton Field, Police Station, Hunnewell Field, Elm Park, Fire Station, DPW complex, Farms Railroad Station, Hillside Road area, and Warren Playground.

The Cochituate Aqueduct is also being used to provide irrigation water. The drainage water is used instead of using drinking water to supply the irrigation systems. Eventually the irrigation systems at Central Park, Church Park, Post Office Park, Hunnewell Field, and Elm Park will be converted to Aqueduct water. This project will not only save precious drinking water, it will also utilize a natural resource that is not currently being used.

This action will provide even greater importance to this piece of land that is often overlooked and underutilized by the Town.